

Toward a Virtual World Society

Tom Furness

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Abstract: In his seminar, Prof. Furness will review some of the ups and downs in his professional journey and his new quest of founding the Virtual World Society: a community of pioneers and latter-day adventurers seeking to explore and guide VR and AR technology to solve pervasive problems in the world.

Bio: *Tom Furness* is a Professor in Industrial & Systems Engineering at the University of Washington. For fifty years Professor Furness has been pioneering the field of virtual reality. In 1989 after spending 23 years of working for the Department of Defense designing and testing fighter cockpits, he founded the Human Interface Technology Laboratory (HIT Lab) at UW and later the HIT Lab NZ at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand and the HIT Lab Australia at the University of Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania. He is the inventor of the personal eyewear display, the virtual retinal display and holds 21 patents in advanced sensor, display and interface technologies. With his colleagues and students Dr. Furness has started 27 companies, two of which are traded on NASDAQ at a market capitalization of > \$ 8 B (USD). In 1998 he received the Discover Award for his invention of the virtual retinal display. He has over 100 publications in the field of advanced interfaces. Tom maintains an active role in virtual and augmented reality development and application. In June 2015 he presented a keynote titled 'Being the future' at the Augmented World Expo June 2015 in Santa Clara, California, where he received the first lifetime achievement award for his 50 year contribution to the VR and AR Industries. He is currently serving as a senior scientific advisor for EnvelopVR and other related companies. He is recognized as the 'grandfather of virtual reality'.

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